Modal Verbs

Auxiliary verbs used to express ability, permission, obligation, probability

Ability

- **Can**: Present/Future ability (I can swim.)
- **Could**: Past ability (She could read at five.)

Obligation

- **Must**: Strong obligation (You must wear a helmet.)
- **Ought to**: Moral obligation (You ought to help the poor.)
- **Shall**: Legal/formal obligation (You shall obey the law.)

Advice

- **Should**: Suggestion (You should study harder.)
- **Ought to:** Recommendation (You ought to see a doctor.)

Politeness/Requests

- **Would**: Polite request (Would you pass the salt?)
- **Could**: Polite request (Could you help me?)

Permission

- **Can**: Informal permission (You can go now.)
- **Could**: Past ability (She could read at five.)
- **Might**: Tentative permission (You might be allowed to join.)

Probability/Certainty

- **Must**: Strong certainty (He must be at work.)
- **Might/May:** Possibility (It might rain.)
- **Could**: Less certain possibility (She could be home.)

Future Intentions/Decisions

- **Will**: Definite future (I will call you.)
- **Shall**: Formal future (We shall overcome.)

Hypotheticals/Conditionals

- **Would**: Hypothetical situations (I would go if I had time.)
- **Could**: Possibility in conditionals (If I tried, I could succeed.)